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A MOBILIZATION CONCEPT FOR THE FUTURE

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

Intended for Publication

by

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U.S. Army War College

Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013

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ABSTRACT

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## A MOBILIZATION CONCEPT FOR THE FUTURE

The U.S. Army is faced with some of its most difficult and challenging organizational problems since the beginning of World War II. One of the most difficult of these problems is, and will continue to be, our concept of mobilization of reserve components (RC) in time of war or crisis. The purpose of this paper is to discuss a potential concept for mobilization in light of the national and international political pressures that will likely be generated by a Soviet continuation of "glasnost" and "perestroika."

Our current concept of mobilization is founded on a long and complex series of congressional, executive and military initiatives that have evolved from the beginning of the nation down to current times. In relation to the Soviet forces, the Army today may be described as a relatively small, standing, active component (AC), backed by a very large reserve component (RC), comprised of National Guard (NG) and U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) forces. The predominance of RC combat units are located in the NG, while the vast majority of combat support and combat service support units are in the USAR. Since 1973, this structure, to include all components, has been officially termed the Total Force.<sup>2</sup> Since World War II, this structuring of forces has been a compromise of economic and political realities versus military need. Our most dangerous potential enemy, the

Soviet Union, has represented the largest peacetime military threat in history. Based on this Soviet military power, we, along with our NATO allies, have had to be ready to counter these large forces within a relatively short time-frame. The threat has indicated the need to maintain a large, standing army but economics have dictated the need to balance the threat with the current structure.

In 1973, as part of the "Steadfast" reorganization of the Army, the role of the RC was tremendously strengthened within this framework by, then Chief of Staff, General Creighton W. Abrams. In an effort to ensure political support for the Army and all U.S. forces in any future war, General Abrams further modified the structural mix of Army forces within the Total Force. This modification made mobilization of the RC a virtual necessity prior to committing the Nation to any significant level of combat action. He accomplished this by placing the vast majority of combat support and combat service support units in the RC. General Abrams saw this as a lesson learned from the Vietnam War. He believed a key reason the Congress and the President did not gain the support of the American people in the Vietnam effort was that the nation was not politically mobilized for the war. He felt the best way to accomplish this is through activation of the Reserves. This causes a genuine commitment on the part of all leaders. As a result of this reorganization, the President and Congress now must address the mobilization question when contemplating sustained use of U.S. combat forces.<sup>3</sup>

Concurrent with the general restructuring of the RC, from 1973 to present, there has been tremendous effort directed toward greatly expanding all levels of support, to include: more modern equipment, highly prioritized training assistance and AC unit affiliation, planning assistance and significantly higher funding support. As stated in the study Army

Mobilization and National Defense:

Finally, Total Force Policy has provided a militarily sensible and practical response to a decisive feature of modern warfare: the rapidity with which military crises unfold necessitates that reserve forces be maintained at combat effectiveness and mobilization readiness levels commensurate with those of the active forces they will augment. As a practical consequence, America's mobilizable forces are being integrated as fully as possible in peacetime with the units and staffs with which they will operate in wartime. A genuine "total force" is evolving.<sup>4</sup>

A discussion of the various types of mobilization is necessary at this time before a logical discussion of future concepts can be outlined. There are five broad types of mobilization within U.S. doctrine. Very briefly they are as follows:

Selective Mobilization-Normally for domestic emergency, not associated with contingencies involving external threats to the national security.

Presidential call-up of 200,000 reservists-An augmentation of units and individuals of the Selected Reserve. In this case the Selected Reserve is made up predominately as established after 1973, of combat support and combat service support troops. This was part of the Abrams effort earlier mentioned. This element may be called to active duty for a period of up to 90 days. The Congress must approve requests to exceed this 90-day period. This type of call-up is not planned as part of a specific contingency plan.

Partial Mobilization-A mobilization of the Ready Reserve upon declaration of the President and Congress of up to 1 million men for up to 24 months.



Full Mobilization-Requires passage of public law by Congress declaring war or other national emergency. Mobilization is of the existing RC troop structure.

Total Mobilization-Requires establishing mobilization units and functions beyond the existing approved force structure and complete mobilization of the underlying civilian industrial, economic and manpower base.<sup>5</sup>

The fundamental assumption that continues to underlie our concept of RC mobilization assumes our primary threat remains a major conflict with the Soviet Union, most likely in Europe, and that a general mobilization analogous to 1940 will be necessary. The general mobilization schedule is a worst-case, time phased concept that does not take into account use of the RC on a less than full or total basis or for special contingencies. In other words, we do not have RC mobilization contingency plans for possible action other than full mobilization. It can be argued the President's emergency authority to call up 200,000 RC troops is in itself a contingency plan. But it is so, only as it reinforces programmed and known shortfalls in the existing AC force structure. The 200,000 man call-up is not a contingency plan in its own right, with a specific contingency mission. It can also be argued that we have the concept of partial mobilization within our lexicon of mobilization levels. As in the 200,000 man call-up however, there is no specific mission, or set of missions, based on partial mobilization contingencies.

This current, almost exclusive, planning for a general mobilization for a European war seems to be in contradiction to the most logical scenario for a mobilization of reserve components. The most likely scenario for mobilization should be

for a short or limited war or for some type of low intensity conflict (LIC). The least likely scenario currently is a general or world war of the type fought by the United States in 1917 and 1941, wars which focused on Europe.

This decline in an immediate threat has come from a realization by the U.S. and Soviet Union that war between the two nations is not only unwinnable, but will destroy the whole world. Because of this balance of mutual destructive ability, direct confrontation with the Soviet Union has become militarily most unlikely. Not only would there be no winners, there may well be no survivors.

A major driver in this new assessment is Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev, who has apparently set his nation in a new direction. According to a recent assessment of Gorbachev's plans:

The new assessment acknowledges the inherent limits of usable power in a world of abundant nuclear arms. It finds the international arena complicated, intractable and messy to a degree that renders it basically unmanageable-and especially resistant to imposed solutions-by either superpower.<sup>6</sup>

Various media reports indicate that "perestroika" and "glasnost" have unleashed demands from the Russian people that will be impossible to reverse. The current civil unrest in the Socialist Republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan are ample evidence of coming social and political changes within the Soviet Union. How much change can be expected is still uncertain but it seems obvious that the Soviets are likely to place more emphasis on internal problems rather than military

expenditures. Yet, despite a potential reduced Soviet threat in Europe, our mobilization machinery remains focused on Europe and a major war scenario.

Complicating the decline of the European threat is the increasing importance of the Pacific basin and Latin America. Japan has become an economic giant and China has the potential to become increasingly powerful as both a military and economic giant. Furthermore, given the economic and political problems present in Latin America, it seems likely that the United States will become increasingly involved in that region or may face regional threats in Latin America that are not connected to the Soviet threat.

In addition to the regional changes, in the last four years we have gone from being the largest lending nation in the world to the greatest debtor nation in the world. In order to resolve that debt, we will need to take strong internal economic measures to ensure our future. We will very likely see major political pressure to reduce troop strength in Europe to help redress U.S. economic problems. The possibility of such action seems increased in light of INF negotiations and efforts to negotiate troop strengths as a follow-up action.

Assuming such future troop reductions are possible, at least over the next five to ten years, this will have a dramatic effect on those economic, military and political factors that shape the composition of U.S. Army force structure and troop stationing. Further, in the interest of cost reduction, it is logical to assume that any forces reduced in Europe, or

elsewhere, will not be kept active in the continental U.S. After all, if costs are to be reduced, they cannot be reduced by activating new installations here in the U.S. We must bear in mind that such installations do not now exist.<sup>8</sup> As a result of major changes occurring in the Soviet Union, Europe, Asia and Latin America, the US defense posture will need to change and as it does, so will the force and mobilization requirements of its military forces.

It is clear the U.S. will want to keep a strong hand in world affairs, yet at the same time, reduce its military operating costs to an acceptable level, with good assurance of protecting its interests world-wide.<sup>9</sup> We will undoubtedly base our defense against the Soviets on a continued balanced nuclear deterrent between the U.S. and the Soviets. This seems assured, particularly in light of our continued technological lead, which appears to be growing in relation to the Soviets.<sup>10</sup> However, we will also need to plan for new mobilization packages which will permit the United States to be prepared for new contingencies in the Pacific and Latin America. Thus it is incumbent on US policy makers to plan ahead and develop a modernization concept for mobilization of our Reserve Components.

In the future, we need to rely more heavily on deployable, rather than forward deployed forces. It is now time to plan and develop appropriate new concepts. We will need powerful, flexible, fast moving ground forces, rapidly deployable many places throughout the world, to protect our national interests.

In his study Mobilization and Limited Warfare, Lee Austin states:

Is the US well postured to meet those national security challenges which require greater expenditure of resources than did Grenada and our peace keeping efforts in Lebanon but less than WWII? Do we have a system well suited to the accomplishment of our national objectives in places like the Far East, Central America, the Caribbean, Africa and Southwest Asia should the use of force be required to protect US interests in those similar places?

Clearly, we must plan for the less likely but more threatening conflicts, but are those the only one for which we are seriously preparing? Do laws now on the books help or hinder planning for the more likely contingencies? Do we have the right kinds of forces and do they have the best equipment for the types of combat in which they are most likely to be involved?"

Thus, it is only logical that the RC will take an even greater portion of the burden of military readiness for overseas, rapid response. We will, of necessity, be required to develop partial mobilization contingency plans that introduce RC units into possible Third World, "brush-fire" or LIC situations. Kreidburg and Henry mention this as a legitimate need in their History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army, and as a major lesson learned during World War II. They emphasized that partial mobilization plans provide much more flexibility.<sup>12</sup> In the future, planning only for full or total mobilization will not provide adequate or intelligent use of the tremendous investment we have made, and will make, in the RC. No doubt, the AC will continue to be the first forces into any future conflict, but we will need to add RC units to the

troop lists for those obviously necessary special contingencies, for which a smaller Army will have to plan. In some cases, it is conceivable that a complete contingency force might be based on a RC troop list. This could be anything from a brigade task force to a corps size expeditionary effort. Those of us raised in the tradition of the post-World War II Army may find this difficult to accept. However, we must remember the prewar Army had a strength of only about 200,000 troops, with a very high reliance on reserve and National Guard forces.<sup>13</sup> Further, at least from a LIC perspective, the U.S. Army has relied, with great success, on RC forces in past conflicts. The punitive expedition into Mexico, in 1916, is an excellent example. A significant number of cavalry forces in the expedition were National Guard. In any event, world political and economic reality may drive us to accept higher risks of this nature. While not the best solution, it may be the only option available.

A logical way to develop troop lists would be to establish geographically oriented "force packages" that meet specific combat capability requirements for the various locations, or terrain types, in the world for which we have interest. The most likely use of these forces would be to rapidly reinforce earlier deployed AC elements. The RC would be earmarked based on their terrain applicability. Further, the RC Annual Training Plan would be based on mission essential task lists (METL) for specific geographic areas. As a beginning, the Army should look at developing two such forces. One might be a multi-division

light force for use in a mountain or jungle environment. The other might be a multi-brigade, heavy force for desert or armor supportive terrain. Supporting forces, from either the RC or AC, would be developed as part of the troop lists. It should be stressed these plans would be in addition to the currently existing plans for the traditional European scenario.

Opponents of this concept will immediately claim that force readiness is the burning issue that makes it unworkable. The RC has never consistently been able to meet the sustained readiness levels of the AC on a component-wide basis. However, a sincere and sustained effort has never been made to support RC units at necessary levels of supply, manning and training to validate or invalidate such a claim. This is a major reason this concept deserves closer study. Unquestionably, this will be the major concern, and it encompasses all aspects of the readiness issue to include: logistics readiness, personnel readiness, maintenance and training readiness. I will look at this issue from several perspectives, to include a broad definition of readiness and a look at a pertinent historical example.

Merritt and Carter provide a very useful framework to define readiness beyond merely the statistical comparisons that are normally used for readiness evaluation.

In the broadest sense, readiness involves establishment of at least the following basic conditions:

1. Manpower, equipment, and training which are commensurate with the assigned wartime mission;
2. Effective mobilization plans and procedures which have been tested and exercised;

3. A coordinated and integrated relationship between Guard and Reserve units and individuals with their gaining commands which must establish direction and guidance for training and all aspects of mission readiness;
4. Individual and unit proficiency consistent with wartime mission;
5. Possession by the reserve unit of (a) detailed wartime mission plans, and logistical and administrative documents and procedures of the gaining unit, to assure consistency of reserve unit preparedness with gaining unit mission and (b) specific proficiency requirements for individuals and units based on the wartime mission;
6. Physical and psychological preparedness by reserve personnel for the realities of mobilization, deployment and mission operations;
7. Sustaining support systems to fully supply and resupply mobilized forces;
8. An effective Defense Department capability to provide immediate benefits to the dependents of mobilized Guard and Reserve personnel.<sup>14</sup>

A historical example exists which is very similar in concept to my force package proposal. In 1965, the Army created the Selected Reserve Force (SRF). The SRF was to counterbalance deployment of AC forces to South East Asia as part of a strategic reserve for the Army. The objective of the program was to mobilize within 7 days of alert and enter active duty at 93 percent strength. The planned SRF force was for 150,000 troops in 976 units. In part, these numbers included two infantry divisions, three separate infantry brigades, an armored cavalry regiment and numerous smaller combat, combat support and



combat service support units. This SRF actually remained in effect until 1969.<sup>15</sup>

A primary reason for its demise was the great difficulty the Army experienced in maintaining these units at an acceptable level of readiness. The example of the mobilization of the 29th Infantry Brigade, in 1968, is an excellent case study regarding readiness. Its after action report demonstrates the great difficulty of using RC forces as rapid mobilization forces. A key problem faced by the 29th was the active component's use of the SRF units as a source of supply for both manpower and equipment. Because of this practice, they were never allowed to reach their potential. The 29th's after action report also demonstrates that, if given the proper guidance, support and priority, the RC can provide very credible forces for quick deployment. This was demonstrated in the relatively rapid manner in which these units initially achieved deployment status before the AC began to draw them down in support of other AC priorities. Comparing the readiness standards provided by Merritt and Carter with the summary comments from the 29th Brigade after action report shows that the 29th Brigade suffered from many problems, but none that could not be easily resolved.<sup>16</sup> The findings are very accurately described by a study entitled Mobilization of the National Guard and Army Reserve: Historical Perspective and the Vietnam War, written at the Strategic Studies Institute in 1984.

\*Mobilization planning was completely inadequate.

\*Unit selection criteria were ill-advised and ill-planned.

\*Personnel actions were poorly planned and problems were numerous.

\*Stationing plans were developed late and with considerable difficulty.

\*Equipment shortages were many, distribution was chaotic, and logistics requirements were based on faulty assumptions.

\*Unit training requirements exceeded Department of the Army assumptions.

\*Unit integrity was widely violated."

The SRF is an excellent model of a combat ready, rapid deployable force concept. It failed due to lack of planning, lack of funding, lack of equipment, but most of all, lack of political and military will to make it work. The Merritt and Carter model of readiness, if used as a guide, could have saved a good deal of agony, time and money.

We must recognize, however, that the failure of the SRF took place at a time in history well before the Total Force concept had been initiated by General Abrams. The SRF were high priority units in name only. They did not enjoy the RC focus and support that has come to pass since 1973. The following quote of Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger is taken from Merritt and Carter. It is from a speech delivered to the Confederation of Reserve Officers on 9 August 1982. It is important to this paper as it describes the complete and total change in attitude toward real acceptance and support of the RC.

We can no longer consider reserve forces as merely forces in reserve...Instead, they have to be an integral part of the Total Force, both within the

United States and within NATO. They have to be, and in fact are, a blending of the professionalism of the citizen-soldier. Only in that way can we achieve the military strength that is necessary to defend our freedom.<sup>16</sup>

With a positive attitude and belief such as demonstrated by Mr. Weinberger, we can resolve the readiness issue. Ironically, it may well be that the old SRF concept will be renewed due to the reduction of the threat in Europe and the pressure to cut troop strength in Europe.

The model discussed by Merritt and Carter suggests some specific actions necessary to make the force package concept viable. If such a proposal was implemented, adequate manning, full equipping of units and training commensurate with the wartime mission will be the fundamental basis for success or failure of the concept. Manpower may be the most crucial. In order to provide adequate manning, some full-time AC personnel may have to be added to the troop lists to keep these units at the highest state of MOS and strength fill. It must be assumed this total concept will come to pass as part of at least some reduction of forces in Europe. It is reasonable to assume that while many units will be deactivated, at least some manpower will be available for reassignment. With the assumed reduction of overseas strength and deactivation of some AC units, this should not be difficult.

Further, additional first line equipment should become available from these same deactivated AC units. Training will inevitably be improved by the addition of full-time AC

leadership. This is not to say RC leadership cannot do the job. It is to say this is an issue far beyond specifically Guard, Reserve and Regular points of view. This is meant to be a totally new approach, with the right people in the right place, regardless of component. This philosophy must be clear from the outset. This approach will create full-time units which will be manned with both AC and RC personnel. However, they will not be just cadre units, but rather fully manned units. This would be so conceptually different that it would be appropriate to say there would be a new component, ie, the Combined Component (CC).

If such units were created, the following actions could be done to improve readiness. Testing and exercising mobilization plans and procedures would be a constant requirement. However, this could be done with minimum disruption to the civilian community by exercising independent sections, staffs and other elements at varying times. As in the case of the old SRF concept, this did not prove impossible to do.

A coordinated and integrated relationship between components, individuals and gaining commands would and must become a way of life. This demands a total change in mind set-a genuine Combined Component attitude. This will require all personnel to think far more in terms of the unit, rather than in terms of what is best for one component or the other.

Individual and unit proficiency will naturally grow within this framework. With new senior military leadership schooled in this philosophy, and selected from all components, success is likely. Without this type of leadership however, failure is probable.

Integration of the components for operational, logistical and administrative planning will be the key broad strength of this concept. It will require constant updating of plans and procedures to ensure across the board readiness.

Physical and psychological preparedness by RC personnel will not be easy, but it is not impossible. Here again, enlightened leadership will be in great demand. Physical fitness and mental preparedness have been primary concerns of warrior leaders throughout history, particularly in the U.S. Army. We know how to accomplish these goals. In this case small unit integrity, innovative leadership, teamwork and positive attitudes will prevail.

Sustaining support systems will require political discipline, military commitment and the support of the American people. If the force package units are to be kept at the highest levels of deployability possible, we must avoid the temptation to "cost-cut" or "short change" into readiness postures of the past.

Lastly, finding ways of providing immediate benefits to dependents of the Guard and Reserve during mobilization is critical. The solutions to this may well require new legislation and administrative action. We can do no less than support these actions, whatever it may take.

This is a plan that calls for bold new vision. If "glasnost" and "perestroika" have the effect of changing the world military structure, it is much to our advantage to be on the leading edge of the change. Indeed, we can hope the military

situation in the future will not drive us to desperate measures to defend the Nation or to destroy the military preparedness of this country. This new concept has not been offered out of desperation, but rather out of the belief that a massive confrontation with the Soviet Union is becoming ever more unlikely, and the availability of large numbers of AC units is very likely to be diminished in the future. At the same time, conflict in the Third World will remain a threat into the future. For that threat in particular, the RC, or in the author's view, the Combined Component represents a viable and effective capability to defend our Nation's interests.

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